**CONGRESS**
**POLI 317**
**Spring 2011**

Rick Wilson T TH 10:50 – 12:05
Baker 226, x3352
rkw@rice.edu
http://rkw.rice.edu/
Office Hrs: W 11-12 T 1:30-2:30 (or by appointment)

The U.S. Congress is despised as an ineffective and ungainly institution. Yet citizens tend to trust their own congressperson (with over 90 percent of incumbents being re-elected). Such is the nature of representation. The Founders established the U.S. Congress as the primary representative institution. Our task this semester is to explore Congress as a representative institution, to understand its complex structure and to explore the ways in which it is being transformed.

We will begin by considering the theoretical underpinnings and historical development of the U.S. Congress in order to more fully understand and evaluate its current status. We will then examine the incentives of contemporary members of congress in the electoral arena. Next we will turn to Congress's internal structure and processes and its links with other political institutions, such as the presidency, parties, and interest groups. Finally, we will focus on the policy process as it unfolds in Congress.

Grades will be based on the following assignments: two examinations (30% each), problem sets (30%), and class participation (10%). You are expected to keep up-to-date with *all* reading assignments and to be prepared to discuss the readings during class. Expect to be called on in class to discuss the readings. The Honor Code is in effect for all class assignments.

*Required Stuff.*

There is one text: *Congress and Its Members* (12th Ed.) by Roger Davidson, Walter Oleszek and Frances Lee, CQ Press. It is useful. At the same time you will be expected to use electronic documents available from the library or on Owlspace. If you have questions about how to use the Library's resources, please let me know.

In addition, there will be a "lab fee" of $5.00 for this class. During the semester you will be participating in a number of in-class experiments. The experiments will illustrate various facets of the course. The data from the experiments will be posted and you will be asked to "analyze" these data (see the brief discussion of "problem sets" below). Your lab fee will be matched by the instructor. During the experiments you will accumulate "points" that will be earned as a function of your participation in the experiments. At the end of the class the total amount of money (your fee plus what the instructor adds) will be returned to you. You will receive a share of the total pot based on your proportion of the

total points. Your earnings at the end of the course will be calculate by the following formula:

$ Earnings = $ Total Pot * (Your total points/Total points in the experiment)

It is conceivable that you could earn nothing or that you could earn the total amount in the pot. Most likely you will earn some amount in between. If you happen to miss a class on the day in which an experiment is run, you will earn no points that day. However, you will still be able to see the posted data and the problem set attached to the experiment. You will be able to write the assignment for that class period.

*Problem Sets*.

There will be a number of problem sets to solve over the course of the semester. These problem sets may involve some math and they will certainly involve some analytic thinking. You can expect 8 such assignments over the course of the semester. Problem sets are due at the beginning of the class. The problem sets will be posted on Owlspace.

*Other Information*.

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students should contact Disabled Student Services in the Ley Student Center.

My office hours are posted above. However, I am around a great deal, so feel free to drop on by. Before turning up, however, you might want to check to see if I'm in the office. Give me a call or send me an email.

| **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings** |
|---|---|---|
| Jan. 11 | Introduction (Experiment) | |
| Jan 13 | Constitutional Foundations | Davidson, Oleszek and Lee (Hereafter DOL), *Congress and Its Members*, Chapter 1.<br><br>Stern, Seth. "Republicans Turn to Constitutionalism to Rein in Authority." *CQ Weekly* (January 10, 2011): 110-17. http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport112-000003792345<br><br>The US Constitution, Article I http://www.constitution.org/cons/constitu.htm |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Madison, The Federalist Papers, Nos. 10, 35, 47, 51, 57, 62<br>These can be found at:<br>http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa00.htm |
| Jan 18 | Congress – An Historical Overview | Wilson, R. K. 1999. Transition Governance in the United States: Lessons from the First Federal Congress. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* **24**, 543-568.<br><br>DOL, Chapter 2.<br><br>Cooper, J. and D. Brady. 1981. "Institutional Context and Leadership Style: The House from Cannon to Rayburn." *American Political Science Review*. 75(2): 411-425. |
| Jan 20 | Contemporary Congress | Davidson, Roger H. "The Advent of the Modern Congress: The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946." Legislative Studies Quarterly 15, no. 3 (1990): 357-73.<br><br>Goldfarb, Sam. "Parties Wrapping Up Committee Rosters." *CQ Weekly* (December 27, 2010): 2949.<br>http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport111-000003786971<br><br>Allen, Kent. "Fortune Reverses For Democrats." *CQ Weekly* (December 27, 2010): 2904-6.<br>http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport111-000003786879<br><br>Goldfarb, Sam. "Term Limits Win Out in Chairmen Picks." *CQ Weekly* (December 13, 2010): 2868.<br>http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport111-000003777904<br><br>"New Leaders, 'New Movement'." *CQ Weekly* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | (November 22, 2010): 2712-13. http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport111-000003766987<br><br>Schatz, Joseph J. "The Trials Ahead for John Boehner." *CQ Weekly* (November 8, 2010): 2520-23. http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport111-000003760035 |
| Jan. 20 | Experiment | |
| Jan. 25 | Spatial Models 1 | Krehbiel, K. 1988. "Spatial Models of Legislative Choice." *Legislative Studies Quarterly.* 13(3): 259-273. (Don't read the entire paper!) |
| Jan. 25 | Problem Set Due | |
| Jan. 27 | Spatial Models 2 | Ansolabehere, S, J. Snyder and C. Stewart. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in US House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (1): 136-159. |
| Jan. 27 | Problem Set Due | |
| **Feb 1** | Contemporary Congress | Kady II, Martin. "New Majority, New Rules." *CQ Weekly Online* (January 6, 2007): 122-124. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport110-000002424023<br><br>"New Rules for the House." *CQ Weekly* (January 10, 2011): 121. http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport112-000003792389<br><br>Friel, Brian. "Senators Negotiate Proposed Rules Changes on Holds, Filibuster Power." *CQ Weekly* (January 10, 2011): 125. http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport112-000003792351 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Kravitz, Walter. "The Advent of the Modern Congress: The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970." Legislative Studies Quarterly 15, no. 3 (1990): 375-99. |
| Feb 1 | Problem Set Due | |
| Feb 3 | Congressional Perceptions and Motivations | Parker, Glenn R., and Roger H. Davidson. "Why Do Americans Love Their Congressmen So Much More Than Their Congress?" Legislative Studies Quarterly 4, no. 1 (1979): 53-61.<br><br>Hibbing, John R. "How to Make Congress Popular." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2002): 219-44. |
| | | |
| Feb 8 | Congressional Recruitment | DOL, Chapter 3<br><br>Maisel, L. Sandy and Walter J. Stone. 1997. "Determinants of Candidate Emergence in U.S. House Elections: An Exploratory Study." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 22 (1): 79-96.<br><br>Copeland, Gary. 1989 "Why House Members Seek Election to the Senate." Legislative Studies Quarterly 14 (4): 549-565. |
| Feb 10 | Congressional Elections – Redistricting | Jost, Kenneth. 2004. "Redistricting Disputes: Should the courts limit partisan gerrymandering?" *CQ Researcher*. 14 (10) March 12, 2004. http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2004031200<br><br>Wilson, Reid. "State Tectonics: How Redistricting Will Shift the Political Landscape." *Campaigns and Elections*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 32-36, Apr 2008 (2008).<br><br>Pearson, Kathryn. "Demographic Change and the Future of Congress." *PS: Political Science & Politics* (2010), 43: 235-238. DOI: 10.1017/S1049096510000053 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Feb 15 | Experiment | |
| Feb 15 | Congressional Elections | DOL, Chapter 4<br><br>Lau, R. and G. Pomper. 2002. "Effectiveness of Negative Campaigning in US Senate Elections." *American Journal of Political Science*. 46 (1): 47-66.<br><br>McArdle, John. "GOP Makes Record Gains In Recapturing a Majority." *CQ Weekly* (November 8, 2010): 2547-51. http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport111-000003760077<br><br>Peoples, Steve. "For Democrats, a Blue Lining to a Stormy Week." *CQ Weekly* (November 8, 2010): 2570-72. http://library.cqpress.com.ezproxy.rice.edu/cqweekly/weeklyreport111-000003760079 |
| Feb. 17 | Problem Set due | |
| Feb. 17 | Campaign Finance | Billitteri, Thomas. 2008. "Campaign Finance Reform: Have efforts to reign in political donations failed?" *CQ Researcher.* 18: 22 (July 13, 2008). http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2008061300<br><br>Perrine, Keith and Alex Knott. 2010. "Court Loosens Campaign Spending Law." *CQ Weekly*. Jan. 25, 2010, p. 238. |
| Feb. 17 | EXAM | (Take Home) |
| Feb 22 | District vs. DC | Herrick, R., M. Moore and J. Hibbing. 1994. Unfastening the Electoral Connection: The Behavior of U.S. Representatives When Re-election is No Longer a Factor." *Journal of Politics*. 56(1): 214-227.<br><br>Fenno, Richard F., Jr. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* 71, no. 3 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | (1977): 883-917. |
| Feb 24 | District vs. DC | DOL, Chapter 5 |
| Feb. 24 | Exam Due | |
| | | |
| Mar. 1, 3 | Spring Break | No Class |
| Mar 8 | Parties and Organization (House) | Smith, Steven S. 2000. "Positive Theories of Congressional Parties." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 25 (2): 193-215.<br><br>Greenblat, Alan. 2007. "Democrats in Congress: have they made a difference since their takeover?" *CQ Researcher*. 17 (22) June 8, 2007. http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2007060800<br><br>Zeller, Shawn. "2008 Votes Studies: Party Unity -- Parties Dig In Deep on a Fractured Hill." *CQ Weekly Online* (December 15, 2008): 3332-3335. http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/weeklyreport110-000002997734 |
| | | |
| Mar 10 | Parties and Organization (Senate) | Krehbiel, K. 1986. "Unanimous Consent Agreements: Going Along in the Senate." *Journal of Politics*. 48: 306-329.<br><br>Evans, C. L. 1999. "Legislative Structure: Rules, Precedents, and Jurisdictions." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 24(4): 605-642. |
| Mar. 15 | Experiment | |
| Mar. 15 | Parties and Leadership | DOL, Chapter 6<br><br>Sinclair, Barbara. 1999. "Transformational Leader or Faithful Agent? Principal-Agent Theory and House Majority Party Leadership." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 24 (3): 421-449. |
| Mar. 17 | The Institution: | DOL, Chapter 7 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Committees 1 | |
| Mar. 17 | Problem Set Due | |
| Mar. 22 | The Institution: Committees 2 | Maltzman, Forrest. 1998. "Maintaining Congressional Committees: Sources of Member Support." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 23 (2): 197-218.<br><br>Maltzman, F. and Smith, S. S., 1994. "Principals, Goals, Dimensionality, and Congressional Committees." *Legislative Studies Quarterly.* 19 (4): 457-476. |
| Mar. 22 | Experiment | |
| Mar. 24 | MidTerm Break | |
| Mar. 24 | | |
| Mar. 29 | Problem Set Due | |
| Mar. 29 | The Institution: The Floor | DOL, Chapter 8 |
| **Mar. 31** | The Institution: Two Body Problem | DOL, Chapter 9<br><br>Binder, S. 1999. "The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96." *American Political Science Review*. 93 (3): 519-533. |
| March 31 | Experiment | |
| April 5 | Congress and the Presidency | DOL, Chapter 10 |
| April 7 | Problem Set Due | |
| April 7 | Congress and Bureaucracy | DOL, Chapter 11<br><br>McCubbins and Schwartz "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols Versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science*. 28 (1): 165-179. |
| April 12 | Interest Groups | DOL, Chapter 13<br><br>Heberlig, Eric S. "Getting to Know You and Getting Your Vote: Lobbyists' Uncertainty and the Contacting of Legislators." Political Research Quarterly 58, no. 3 (2005): 511-20. |
| April 14 | Budget and Domestic | DOL, Chapter 14 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Politics | Hacker, Jacob, 2010. "The Road to Somewhere: Why Health Reform Happened." *Perspectives on Politics* Volume 8 Issue 03, pp 861 -876. DOI:10.1017/S1537592710002021 |
| April 19 | Foreign Policy | DOL, Chapter 15<br><br>Peake, Jeffrey S. "Coalition Building and Overcoming Legislative Gridlock in Foreign Policy, 1947-98." Presidential Studies Quarterly, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 67-83, March 2002 (2002).<br>. |
| April 21 | Summary | DOL, Chapter 16 |
| May 4 | **Final Exam Due for Graduating Seniors** | (Take Home Exam) |
| May 4 | **Final Exam Due for non- graduating students** | (Take Home Exam) |